date

From: Ed Maloney
To: Jim Taylor

Jim:

In your recent note, you asked about a time frame for Windows, so I
thought that I would take a few seconds and let you know about some
of our Windows-related activities.

We have been engaged in an investigation of the Windows system for
well over a year. During that time, we have evaluated almost all of
the products which operate in the Windows environment, including
Microsoft's exceptional new Excel spreadsheet product. A number of
our systems programmers have become trained in Windows programming
techniques, and we have developed an in-house capability to build our
own Windows applications. We have implemented one communications
application for CPAS, CoordiNet, which was created from both
commercial products and our own custom interface software. That
system will soon become operational. We have also acquired an early
release of the new OS/2 operating system, and we expect to receive a
pre-release copy of the Windows-derived OS/2 Presentation Manager
within a few months.

At this point, we have made no architectural commitment to adopt
Windows as an OIT standard. The computer industry has not
overwhelmingly endorsed Windows, although it is now an excepted
standard for Desktop Publishing on IBM PCs. We expect that IBM's
inclusion of the Presentation Manager in their Systems Application
Architecture will promote a Windows standard, but the complexity of
software development for this environment has slowed its total
industry acceptance. Consequently, we believe that it is in the
interest of the Agency to move cautiously towards in this direction.

The potential benefits of a consistent graphical user interface such
as Windows are fairly clear, however, and it is also clear that a
significant amount of engineering will have to be accomplished in
order to develop a Windows-based workstation strategy. Consequently,
we have started a number of projects within our Engineering Group
which are directed towards providing the tools which will allow us to
integrate commercial Windows and OS/2 products with Agency-specific
applications, such as AIM and SAFE. We have been focussing on
document creation, list, and display capabilities, as well as trying
to insure that we can provide Windows-compatible host communications.
We have also developed the capability to operate Windows on almost
all of the existing Agency PCs. Significantly, the new
Agency-standard workstation should be able to run both Windows and
OS/2 in all configurations.

Finally, we have reached a tentative, but potentially quite
significant agreement with the DDO regarding the use of Windows for
Allstar Upgrade workstations. The DO has specific requirements for
large screens and side-by-side document display which can best be met
by Windows. Furthermore, that organization has expressed a strong
desire to adopt an approach which will minimize their training
requirements, which will exploit the power of the PC, and which can
evolve towards IBM's System Application Architecture and OS/2. For
this reason, we have committed to providing them with a SAFE and AIM
interface that permits them to use Windows for document creation and
editing. The DO has been actively developing their own Windows-based
application to facilitate the creation of cables. These developments
are currently targeted for operation late this summer, and will
represent the most substantial application of Windows in the Agency.
Following the initial deployment, we hope to gradually provide the DO
(and the DI) additional Windows-based SAFE, AIM, and database
functions.

All of this does not specifically address the issue which prompted
your original question, however. Our huge base of existing software
combined with dwindling development funds and our cautious approach
to new architectures all insure that it will be a long time before we
can provide a universal graphical user interface to our systems. I
hope that you will agree, however, that we are taking some very
positive steps in that direction.

If you have further questions regarding Windows, please contact Bill
STAT   who has been acting as a focal point for these activities,
STAT 11 can be reached on extension

STAT

ejm